

Seasonable Considerations

Relating to

*Honour 10.16
Not in 20.*

Insolvent Debtors,

Drawn from

The PRACTICE of *Foreign States,*

Addressed to

The Right Honourable

Arthur Onslow, Esq;

SPEAKER of the *Honourable*
HOUSE of COMMONS,

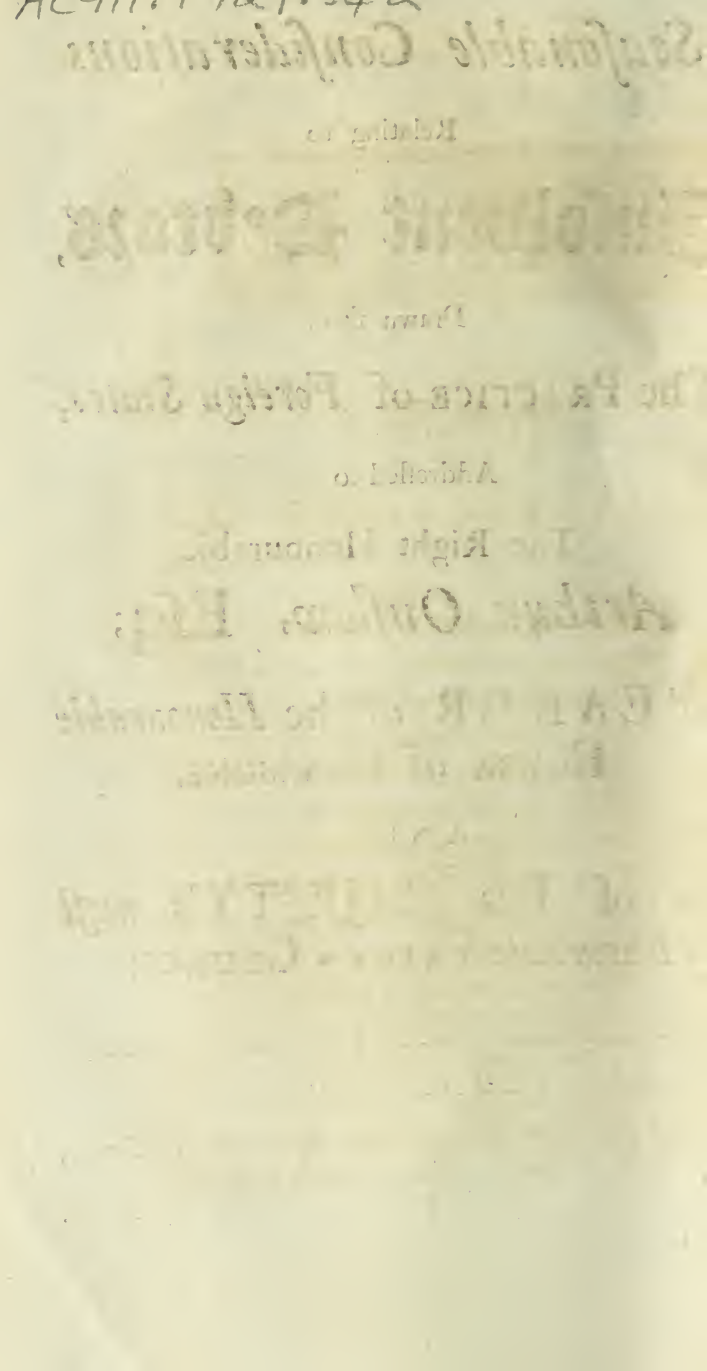
AND

One of His MAJESTY's *most*
Honourable PRIVY - COUNCIL.

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Seasonable

CONSIDERATIONS, &c.

AMongst the many Advantages flowing from the Excellency of the English Constitution, One of the most considerable is the Facility of abrogating old Laws, when found to be inconvenient; by the Creation of others better framed for the Security and Happiness of the People. It must be owned indeed, That Reforms of every Kind may be brought about with more Expedition, in Countries where the *Regal Authority* is absolute and unlimited; because when All depends upon the Will of one Man, Resolutions are sooner taken, and Orders executed with greater Impetuosity; than they can possibly be in mixt Governments. But a true

B

Information

Information of the State of Things, upon which only a perfect Reformation can be grounded, is much longer in reaching the Ears of such a Prince than is consistent with the Condition of those that suffer. It is some Time before the Cause of an Evil is discerned, even by such as feel it, much longer before it will be taken Notice of by those whom it does not affect, and far longer still e'er it begets such a Degree of Compassion as may induce Men in Power to attempt a Redress : So that considering the Distance between a Cottage and the Throne, how few Accesses there are to it, and those how impracticable, it is rather to be wondered, that an exact Knowledge of the Miseries endured by the forlorn Part of Mankind should ever penetrate thither, than that it should be so long in its Progression. But this is not all : The dazzling Grandeur that surrounds a *King*, presents a Scene so widely different from those which begirt the unfortunate, that it requires the utmost Force and Extent of the human Capacity, at once to enjoy the one, and conceive a true Idea of the other : Inasmuch, that a Prince who should even wish to manifest himself the real Father of his People, except he be equally wise and gracious, constant and penetrating ; except he be severe to himself, and compassionate to-
wards

wards others, He will never grow acquainted with, and much less can he provide Remedies for those Grievances to which the lower Part of Mankind is constantly exposed

From this State of the Case, one would be apt to think at first Sight, that a quick Redress of Grievances should be peculiar to popular States; and especially to such whose *Regents* are chosen from amongst the People, and may from thence in some measure be considered in the Joint-Character of *Representatives* and *Sovereigns*. But, whether Governments founded merely in the Consent of the People, are of a Nature that does not easily admit Alterations? Whether the ruling Members in a Commonwealth, would beget a Loyalty to themselves under Colour of a strict Adherence to the Laws in Being? Or, whether in States thus moulded, there grows up a certain *Cynical* Moroseness impatient of any Change or Relaxation? Certain it is, that some of the most eminent and zealous Republicans, as well of old *Rome* as other modern States, have been extremely tenacious of old Customs, and from the Dread of Innovation, have continued to live under the Force of Laws, which had long been found both inconvenient and absurd.

The

The Constitution of *England* is compounded of all that is most excellent in the several Governments of the *One*, the *Few*, and the *Many*. The People have *Representatives* too nearly allied to them to be long unacquainted with their smallest Grievances, as well as their more important Interests. The *Peers* of the *Realm* form a Kind of illustrious *Aristocracy*, and are at once the Guardians of Justice, as well as a strong and reciprocal Defence against the Encroachments of the *Crown* on the publick Liberties, or the Invasions of the *People* on the Rights of the Prerogative. The Executive Power is lodged in the *Sovereign*, and when once Laws are enacted, the *King* is Master of the whole Force and Power of the Nation to force an Observance of them.

A Government so constituted will be frequent in Improvements of every Kind; yet, notwithstanding our natural Tendency to Reformation, there is one Point in which all our Neighbours, of every Denomination, have got the Start of us. This relates to *Debtors truly insolvent*, who are certainly the most miserable Set of Men in every Society that have any Title to a Share in the publick Compassion. The following Quotation will give the Reader a View of the *Dutch* Laws, with Relation to

Debtors

Debtors in general. It is taken from a Book newly published, intituled, *Batavia Illustrata*, &c. by *Onslow Burrisb*, Esq;

The Author, at the Close of that Section which treats particularly of *Holland*, tells us, that he cannot end his Account of that Province, without remarking the Lenity of the Law towards *Debtors*. “ Never was there
“ (says he) so large Credit given to all Sorts of
“ People as in *Holland*, and never any Country
“ where so few languish in Prison. In 1721,
“ those confined for Debt in *Amsterdam* were
“ not more than *Five* and *Twenty*: A trifling
“ Number for a City which has at least as many
“ trading People as *London*. The same Lenity
“ is observed all over the Province, from whence
“ it is generally (tho’ falsely) understood, that
“ the *Dutch* are a People naturally merciful,
“ whereas they are in Reality severe and rigid;
“ but their Laws in this Respect are gentle in-
“ deed, and it may be, owe their Being to that
“ cruel Disposition of the People, to which
“ they are in themselves so opposite. For, be-
“ fore it was enacted, that the Creditor should
“ support his Prisoner with a certain daily Al-
“ lowance, to be settled according to the Plea-
“ sure of the Magistrate, the Prisons were crowd-
“ ed with miserable Men as they are in *England*;
“ of

“ of which the *State* could not but take No-
 “ tice at last, and from thence fell upon Means
 “ to prevent the Loss of so great a Number
 “ of Subjects to the *Publick* by an unuseful
 “ Detention. And as those who owe but little,
 “ are secured from the Persecution of their Cre-
 “ ditors, by the Necessity of maintaining them
 “ in Prison; so they, whose Debts are large,
 “ have an effectual Method to avoid perpetual
 “ Imprisonment, by conforming to the Laws
 “ relating to Bankrupts. When any Person ac-
 “ quaints the *Magistrates* with his Insolvency,
 “ and lays before them an exact Account of
 “ his Circumstances, they immediately order
 “ the *Commissioners* of *Bankrupts* to possess
 “ themselves of his Estate, and exempt his
 “ Person from all Arrests for Six Weeks; which
 “ Time is allowed him to compound with his
 “ Creditors: But if his Endeavours prove in-
 “ effectual, which seldom happens when his
 “ Failure appears to be fairly owing to Losses
 “ and Misfortunes, the Commissioners at the
 “ End of that Term sell his Estate, and make
 “ a Dividend at an Average to the Concerned;
 “ after which the *Magistrates* acquit and exempt
 “ him from all Claims, whether foreign or do-
 “ mestic, nor is it in the Power of any or all
 “ of his Creditors to hinder this when the Fail-
 “ ure is not fraudulent.’

“ Another

“ Another Method of obtaining absolute
“ Freedom in *Holland*, still more expeditious
“ than the former, is for the *Debtor* to apply
“ to the *Provincial High Court of Justice*, re-
“ present his Condition, and give up all he has
“ upon Oath : Upon which he is exempted
“ as before from all future Claims, and is again
“ free to undertake whatever Commerce he
“ pleases. But if the Bankruptcy be fraudulent,
“ and the *Debtor* takes a false Oath, the *Ma-*
“ *gisfrates* are authorized to punish him *ad*
“ *Libitum*, even with Death itself if they think
“ fit.’

“ I will not take upon me either to blame
“ or approve this Facility with which the Par-
“ ty declares himself a Bankrupt in *Holland*,
“ and obtains his Discharge. Certain it is, that
“ fraudulent Bankruptcies are frequent enough
“ there as well as in other Countries, and that
“ we very seldom hear of any Person’s Suffer-
“ ing capitally on that Account. But for the
“ Law which directs the Creditor to maintain
“ his *Debtor* in Prison, the good Effects of it
“ are visible upon the whole Community. I
“ remember when the Bill for preventing fri-
“ volous Arrests depended in *Parliament*, one
“ Argument brought against it, was, that it
“ would destroy the Credit given to inferior
“ People

“ People. But if we may conclude from Ex-
 “ perience, this will certainly be found with-
 “ out Foundation; for as I have observed,
 “ there is no where so much Credit given to
 “ all Degrees of Persons as in *Holland*, tho’
 “ there be no such Thing as a personal Arrest
 “ before the Person has been summoned Three
 “ Times; unless Oath can be made that he
 “ is about to fly the Country. This Effect
 “ the Law has indeed, that every Man is ob-
 “ liged to take Care of his Character. A
 “ dissolute Person would not find any Credit
 “ in *Holland*; and therefore all are under a
 “ Necessity of establishing a certain Degree of
 “ Reputation, proportioned to their several
 “ Conditions, or for Want of this, to pre-
 “ serve at least a Week’s Wages before-hand,
 “ without which it would be impossible to
 “ subsist.’

“ If the Method of treating Bankrupts in
 “ *Holland* be not perfect, ours in *England* is
 “ I think much less so. In *Holland* the Ex-
 “ pence of going thro’ an Act of Bankruptcy,
 “ even before the *High Court* at the *Hague*, is not
 “ above Twenty Pound Sterling; with Us, it
 “ is at least Fourscore. In *Holland* the Magi-
 “ strates are Judges of the Truth or Deceit
 “ of the Debtor, and use him accordingly;
 with

“ with us, tho’ the Commissioners are of Opin-
 “ ion that the Certificate ought be allowed,
 “ the Creditors have it in their Power to hin-
 “ der it ; and this puts many upon Practices
 “ to make Four-Fifths in Number and Value,
 “ that are extremely fraudulent and iniquitous.
 “ In *Holland* the Degree of Punishment, in
 “ Cases of Fraud, is left to the Pleasure of the
 “ Magistrate ; in *England* the Law admits no
 “ Medium, but pronounces either Death or
 “ an Acquittal ; which must naturally make
 “ a Bankrupt doubly cautious in his Methods
 “ of secreting his Effects, and very often hin-
 “ ders his being detected, thro’ a certain Ten-
 “ derness which the Generality of Persons have
 “ for another’s Life, who would perhaps ap-
 “ pear against him, were the Punishment any
 “ Thing less than Capital.’

“ With Regard to personal Arrests, our Law
 “ has indeed been lately softened ; but surely
 “ there remains a further Reformation to be
 “ wished for. Not only in *Holland*, but in *France*,
 “ *Flanders*, *Italy*, the free Towns of *Germany*,
 “ and I believe I may add every other Coun-
 “ try except *Great-Britain* and *Ireland*, the
 “ Debtor is either maintained in Prison by his
 “ Creditor, or discharged upon giving up his

C

“ All.

* Non exi-
bis hinc
donec sol-
veris Ulti-
mam Qua-
drantem.

“ All. In *Holland* the Law is inexorable to-
 “ wards *Criminals*, but indulgent to *Debtors*.
 “ We, on the Contrary, are favourable to *De-*
 “ *linquents* of every Kind, but cruel even to
 “ Oppression where we have any Demand *.
 “ This has long been a great and just Re-
 “ proach to us amongst our Neighbours. It
 “ may be said without Partiality, that *England*
 “ is a very generous Nation; it is remarked
 “ by *Foreigners*, that even our very *Mobs* are
 “ equitable in their Proceedings. *Fair Play*
 “ is a Phrase unknown to the Rest of *Europe*;
 “ yet in Countries where no Man foregoes the
 “ Advantage he has over his Enemy, and
 “ where Forgiveness is a Stranger, there is
 “ still far less Inhumanity practised towards
 “ *Debtors* than in *England*; who, tho’ unfor-
 “ tunate, and bad indeed, according to the
 “ Dialect of *Exchange-Alley*, yet are not al-
 “ ways the worst Men in the Nation. The
 “ Reason of our Behaviour in this Point is ob-
 “ vious enough. Every *Creditor* in *England*
 “ has the Authority of an absolute Prince
 “ over his poor Servant the Debtor, and there
 “ are very few fit to govern. *Physick* is ne-
 “ cessary to repell too great a Redundancy
 “ of Humours in the Body, and the human
 “ Passions will be restrained by nothing but
 “ wholesome Laws enforced by Power. The
 Legislative

“ *Legislative Body* has thought fit to make one
 “ Step towards a Cure of this national Dis-
 “ ease, worthy the *Representatives* of a great,
 “ free, and generous *People*; and I doubt not
 “ but the Time is near when we shall still
 “ act more in Character.”

I could not abridge this Quotation without
 doing Injustice to my Subject, which may be
 further illustrated by an Account of the Con-
 test concerning insolvent Debtors, which began See T.
Liv. L. 4.
in Orat.
 to divide the *Senate of Rome about 250 Years* Canulci.
after the Building of the City, and was after-
 wards agitated to such a Degree, as to pro-
 duce one of the most extraordinary Revolu-
 tions that ever happened in that Common-
 wealth.

Upon the Extinction of the *Regal Autho-
 rity*, the *Roman Senate* succeeded to all that
 Power, which had been so much the Object
 of publick Hatred in the Hands of *Tarquin*
 and his Predecessors. Power and Property
 wait upon each other; and the Execution of
 all Dignities and Offices, both Civil and Mili-
 tary, being confined to the Body of the *Senate*
 by the Constitution of the Republick, the *Pa-
 tricians*

tricians soon imbibed the Spirit of Royalty, and it became one of the chiefest Aims of their Policy, to hold the Commons in an extreme Want and a perpetual Dependance.

It had been usual, when the *Romans* were successful against their Enemies, to sell one Part of the conquered Lands to reimburse the Publick for the Expence of the War, and to divide the Rest amongst the poorest of the *Plebeians*. But now, under one Pretext or another, the *Patricians* began to appropriate the better Part of these Lands to themselves, which, in Process of Time, grew to be incorporated with their paternal Estates, in such a Manner that it became impossible to separate them, without throwing the Republick into the most dangerous Convulsions. Thus by an insensible Usurpation the State was defrauded of its Revenue, and the People lost their Subsistence,

But the Avarice of certain Patricians was not confined to Usurpations of this Nature. We are told that even in Times of publick Famine; when the Poor laboured under the Inconveniencies of an unfertile Year, or an Ir-
ruption

ruption of the Enemy, some of the most wealthy were base enough to take the Advantage of such a Conjunction to augment their Estates, by monopolizing the Grain, and selling it out again at immoderate Prices. Thus the poorer Sort being forced to have Recourse to the Rich for their Subsistence, and the Interest of Money not being settled by any Law, Loans were made upon Mortgages at so excessive a Rate, that at last almost the whole Roman Territory came to be vested in the *Order of Patricians*: Nor did their Cruelty stop here; for it being at this Time permitted by the Roman Laws, for a Creditor to arrest the Person of his Debtor upon Default of Payment, * It was frequent for these detestable Usurers, to seize at once the Father of a Family, with one or more of his Children, whom they forced to serve in their Houses like so many Slaves †, and the merciless Creditor not content with imposing Servitude, would often have Recourse to the most exquisite Tortures, in order to exact both Principal and Interest. The Estate of the Debtor was eat up by accumulated Interest, and the People in general, under the Colour of an exact Adherence to the Laws, and an impartial Observation of Justice, were made to suffer the most unjust and grievous Tyranny that ever State was afflicted with.

* Tacit.
An L. 6.
ad An. 786

† Vide
Dion. Ha.
Lib. 6.

Fre-

Frequent were the Mutinies occasioned in *Rome*, for more than twenty Years together, by so cruel a Treatment of the common People : Various were the Reasonings during all that Time in the *Roman Senate*, for and against a Relaxation of the Law in Favour of the *Insolvent*. At last the Point came to a Decision ; for a League being made between certain neighbouring *States*, jealous of the Progress and Grandeur of the Roman People, and News being brought that the Confederate Army was on its March towards *Rome* ; the wretched *Plebeians*, instead of running to their Ensigns with their wonted Alacrity, now absolutely refused to be enrolled for the Defence of a City in which they had no longer any Property.

In this Extremity the Senate had Recourse to the Creation of a *Dictator*, who for the Time being, was invested with an absolute Authority, paramount to all Laws and independant of the Senate. This high Officer was *Manius Valerius*,
 † AVC 259. *Vid.* of Consular Dignity, aged above seventy Years,
 Tit. Liv. Dec. 1 L2. and of a Family from which the People had
 D. Hal. L. 6. no Reason to apprehend either Pride or Injustice †.

The *Dictator* was no sooner entred on the Execution of his Office, than he convoked an Assembly of the *People*, to whom he promised entire Satisfaction of all their Grievances, so soon as the Campagne should be ended; and in the mean Time, by Virtue of his Sovereign Power, he declared them *free and exempt from all Arrest, Suit, or Process at Law, both in their Persons and Estates*. This administred Hope and Consolation. The *People* run in Crouds to inlist themselves for the publick Service *. Ten compleat *Legions* were raised, Six * Id Ibid. of which were given to the two *Consuls*, and the other Four took the Field under the Conduct of the *Dictator*. The Romans marched several Ways to meet their Enemies; one Part of the Confederates were defeated, and the rest reduced to beg a Peace, which they obtained by giving up a Part of their Country, which *Valerius* caused to be parcelled out with great Equity amongst the poorest of the Roman Citizens.

In the mean Time, the *Senate*, who dreaded the Return of the Army, least the Soldiers should extort the Performance of the *Dictator's* Promises, sent their Orders to *Valerius* and the two *Consuls*, still to keep the Field with their
Troops,

Troops, under Pretence that the War was not yet finished. The *Consuls* obeyed; but the *Dictator*, whose Authority was independent of the *Senate*, immediately disbanded his Army, and having declared his Soldiers absolved from the Oath they had taken at their Enrollment, to give a further Proof of his Affection for the People, he chose out Four Hundred from amongst the most opulent of the *Plebeians*, whom he translated into the Order of *Roman Knights*: Which being done, he appeared in the *Senate*, and required that they should disengage him from his Promise, *by an Act for abolishing the Debts of the People.*

Upon this Occasion, the most ancient and most noble amongst the *Patricians*, with Exception only to *Claudius Appius*, were for complying with the *Dictator*. But this *Senator*, at the Head of the most wealthy, and of the young Men, who thought every Concession in Favour of the People, a Diminution of the Honour and Authority of the *Senate*, made so strong an Opposition, that the *Dictator's* Proposition was tumultuously rejected, and He himself indecently reproached with too great an Affectation of Popularity: Nay, they went so far as to insinuate, that if his Person had
not

not been above the Reach of the Law, by Virtue of his Dignity, they would have called him to an Account for disbanding his Forces against the Advice and Directions of the Senate, at a Time when the Enemies of the Republick were still in Arms. But the venerable old Man, disdaining their Reproaches, rose up and spoke in the following Manner. *

D. Hal. L.
6.

“ I see very well, says he, that I am not agreeable to you ; I am reproached with being too popular ; may the *Gods* ordain, that those who shall succeed me in the Defence of the *Roman People* may also resemble me in Point of Moderation. But do not imagine that I will be brought to deceive the Citizens, who trusting to my Assurances, were engaged to take Arms, and at the Expence of their Blood have lately triumphed over your Enemies. A foreign War accompanied with civil Dissentions, induced the *Republick* to honour me with the *Dictatorship*. We are now at Peace abroad, and I am hindered from establishing Tranquility at Home ; thus my Ministry becoming useless, I have resolved to abdicate this great Dignity : I had rather be a Witness of civil Discord as a private Man, than with the Title of *Dictator*.”

D

This

This said, he departed briskly out of the
Senate ; and having convened an Assembly of
 the People, he appeared before them with all
 the Marks of his Dignity ; and having first re-
 turned his Thanks for the Cheerfulness with
 which they had taken Arms under his Orders,
 and commended the Bravery they had shown
 against the common Enemy. “ You have in-
 “ deed, continued He, like good Citizens per-
 “ formed your Duty, and I ought now in my
 “ Turn, to acquit my self of the Promise I
 “ made You. But a *Cabal* more powerful than
 “ even the Authority of a *Dictator*, prevents the
 “ Effect of my sincere Intentions. I am pub-
 “ licly treated as an Enemy to the *Senate* ;
 “ my Conduct is censured ; It is imputed to
 “ me for a Crime that I gave you leave to pil-
 “ lage the Enemy, and much more that I dis-
 “ charged you from the military Oath you
 “ took at your Enrolment. I know in what
 “ Manner I should have resentred such Injuries
 “ in the Morning of my Life ; but an old Man
 “ of above Seventy Years of Age, is of little
 “ Consideration ; and thus as I can neither re-
 “ venge my self nor do you Justice, I voluntarily
 “ renounce a Dignity which is useless to you.
 “ If nevertheless any of my Fellow-Citizens
 “ thinks he has Reason to complain of the
 “ Non-performance of my Promise, I freely
 “ 2-

“ abandon to him the short Thread of Life
“ that remains with me, which he may cut
“ afunder at his Pleasure, without apprehend-
“ ing either my Complaints or Opposition*. * Id. ibid.

The Reader will imagine this Discourse was heard with Respect and Veneration. The whole Multitude gave the *Dictator* the Praises that were due to him; they attended him to his House with as great Applause as if he had ordained the Abolition of their Debts; the Fury of the Populace is turned against the *Senate*, by whom they had been so often deceived; the angry *Plebeians* assemble publickly; and to an exasperated Multitude the most violent Councils are always most agreeable. The whole City was in that Kind of Confusion which usually precedes the most extraordinary Revolutions; when the *Consuls*, who yet held a good Part of the *People* engaged by their military Oath, resolved to take the Field by the Advice of the *Senate*, upon a Pretence that the Enemy was in Arms. But the Soldiers having penetrated the Artifice, grew mad with Rage. Some of the most forward proposed to assassinate the two Consuls upon the Spot, so to disengage themselves from the Oath they had taken to obey their Orders. But the wiser
Sort

Sort representing to them the Impossibility of evading the Obligation of an Oath, by the Commission of so heinous a Crime, they resolved to free themselves another Way, and to *abandon their Country* in Hopes to obtain a Settlement in some Place, where if they did not find all the Advantages that *Roman Citizens* ought to enjoy, they should at least be free from the Persecution of their *Creditors*. In this Determination they immediately took up their Colours, changed their Officers, and under the Orders and Conduct of a *Plebeian*, named *Sicinius Bellutus* *, they retreated from *Rome*, and encamped on an Eminence about Three Miles distant from the City, which the *Romans*, afterwards distinguished with the Title of *Mons Sacra*, from the Importance of the Conventions that were there entered into, and confirmed in the most solemn Manner, between the *Senate* and the *People*.

* AUC
259.
D. Hal.
li. 6.

This was that famous Desertion which brought on a general Abolition of all the private Debts in the *Roman State*, and the Creation of two new Magistrates of the *Plebeian Order*, who were stiled *Tribunes of the People*, and were always to be taken from amongst them. Such was the Effect of the imperious
Maxims

Maxims of *Appius Claudius* *. The whole Detail of this Contest, and of the Negotiations that were managed between the *Senate* and the Deferters, when encamped upon the *Mons Sacra*, may be found in *D. Halicarnassus*, *Livy*, and other Roman Authors. †

* See a further Account of this Senator & his Reasonings in *Dion. Hal.* li. 5 & 6.
 † *Vid. Liv.* Dec. 1. l. 2
C. 32.
D. Hal. l. 6

As to my self, I have not told this Story with any Intention to apply it in the Whole to the Community of *Great-Britain*. I know very well the *Commons* of *England* are at present in no Danger of being eat up by the *Patricians*, whatever may have been their Circumstances formerly. But on the other Hand, I can see no material Difference between the Condition of an *insolvent Debtor* in *England*, cast into Prison and subjected to the Tyranny of a Goaler, and that of the *Roman Plebeian*; unless it be, that in *England* a Prisoner is not (strictly speaking) a *Slave*; he may stile himself a Free-Man tho' in Bonds, and may still enjoy the Privilege of passing the weary Day in such a Manner as He himself pleases. But He is much more effectually lost to the *Society*, and is of far less Use both to himself and his Creditor, than the *Roman Plebeian* considered even in the Station of a *Slave*.

When

When this Abolition of *private Debts* took Place amongst the *Roman People*, they were in a Manner Strangers to all Arts and Employments except War and Agriculture; and it may be said, that Examples taken from a Country, where the Promotion of Commerce and the Preservation of publick Credit, were not reckoned amongst the principal Interests of the *State*, will be of little Use to determine us in the Choice of what is fit to be done in our own. But, setting aside all Considerations about those that are now actually in Prison amongst us, I will venture to affirm, that the Fear of such Treatment as may be expected from a merciless Creditor, which was what induced the *Romans* to abandon their City, will be as powerful a Motive to make our Artizans fly the Kingdom, whenever their ill Fortune brings them within the same Danger. It is to the Apprehension of perpetual Imprisonment that we must in a great Measure attribute the Flight of so many *English* Manufacturers, and Artists of all Kinds, as of late Years have been scattered over *Europe*. To these Men the *Muscovites* owe their Perfection in Ship-Building, and without their Assistance all the unwearied Application of the late *Czar* to this Purpose had been ineffectual. *Prussia*, is in a Manner indebted to them for the very Rise of a Woollen Manufactory;

Manufactory; as *France* is for the great Improvements that have been lately made in *Milling, Shearing*, and other Branches of it in that Kingdom.

What I have said, is not the Effect of mere Speculation, or any Disposition for making bold Assertions. About ten Years ago, I my self saw the *Muscovite Fleet*, in which were several Ships built after the most perfect Models; and I am sure, there is not an English Seaman who has been used to the *Baltick*, that will not join with me in deploring the severe Cause that drove our Countrymen to *Russia*, by whose Direction those Ships were built; which have enabled the *Muscovites* to lord it over the ancient naval Powers of the *North*, and have more than once forced *England* into a large Expence in order to keep a Ballance there, which it is likely enough we may be obliged to submit to again.

With Respect to *Prussia* I am very well assured, that no longer than Seven Years ago, His Majesty of that Name, had above *Ten Thousand Weight of coarse Wool* in his Store-houses, which was so matted together, and grown so hard as to resist the common Cards used in scribbling

scribbling Wool, and was therefore thought useless. But upon the Arrival of an *Englisbman* at *Berlin*, who from hard Circumstances and the Fear of a Goal was glad to contract with the *Prussian Minister* at this Court, an Engine was invented by him, with which all the aforesaid Wool was opened and wrought up ; and it is notorious, that the *King of Prussia* does now cloath all his Army with his own Manufactures, and has annually large Quantities of Cloth to spare, which His *Majesty* sells to the *Muscovites*, very much to the Detriment of the northern Parts of this Kingdom.

Lastly, as to *France*, I might appeal to several honourable Persons now amongst us, to say what Pains were taken to send Home the *Englisb* Artizans, that were enticed thither by the Agents of the famous Mr. *Law*. Nor was it the mere Desire of Gain that tempted these Workmen abroad ; for an *Englisbman* is born with a strong Love for his Country, and a laudable Partiality for its Customs, and there is not one Artizan in an Hundred, but is so much prepossessed against the foreign Manner of Living, the Inconveniences of an arbitrary Government, and above all, the ill Faith that has been practised towards such Workmen in the
several

several Kingdoms I have mentioned, that nothing but the Dread of perpetual Confinement at Home could prevail with him to abandon his Country and all that is dear to him.

A great many moving Things might be said in this Place ; but I chuse to convince my Reader's Understanding rather than captivate his Affections. To comprehend rightly what we lose by the Flight of our Workmen, let us only consider what we have gained by the Reception of the many *Refugees* that have from Time to Time fled to us, and are now incorporated with the Mass of the People. It is to the *Walloons* and *French* that we owe almost all our Woollen and Silk Manufactures ; and the Descendants of these Men, who are warm in the Abhorrence of Church Tyranny and arbitrary Government, will perhaps endure the Worst they can meet with here, rather than go back again ; but our own Countrymen, who see and feel the Severity of our Laws with Regard to Property, and have only heard of foreign Grievances at a Distance, will be tempted to try a Change in Hopes of bettering their Condition:

E

Thus

Thus far I think it has not been amiss for us to keep the Desertion of the *Romans* in our Eye: But if the Reader should not be willing to admit the Use of any Expedients, that may be grounded upon the Practice of a State whose Policy and Interests were so different from our own, he must then from the contrary Reason admit the Force of Example in the Government of *Holland*.

The Fate of such miserable Men as now languish in our Prisons may deserve our Compassion; but the Hazard of losing Numbers of our People from the Apprehension of perpetual Imprisonment, is of far greater Consequence, and calls for all our Address and Tenderness, in framing a Law which may obviate this Danger, *and be a standing Relief and Consolation to such as through Misfortunes shall become truly insolvent.*

In Order to this, the foregoing Parallel between *England* and *Holland*, both which depend so much upon a trading Interest, as to be each others Rivals in almost every Branch of Traffick, seems to deserve a serious Consideration;

fideration ; and I confess it has so much Weight with me, that I cannot help joining Wishes with the Author of *Batavia Illustrata*, that we may speedily see a Redress of those Calamities, which he has touched in so just and feeling a Manner.

FINIS,



